

read both consistent with Applicants' specification, as required by the MPEP, and also read onto anything fairly taught by Mann. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding rejections against claim 1 and its dependent claims be withdrawn.

Claim 2 should be allowable over and above the reasons set forth with regard to claim 1 since it specifically requires that a bowl be attached to the bowl attachment of the center support, and that the bowl surround a metallic filter element. But the office action does not even identify the separate bowl and bowl attachment features, and fails to even mention Applicants' claimed spatial relationship between the bowl and the metallic filter element. Since the office action is silent with regard to the subject matter of claim 2, it appears that claim 2 was not even examined. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that claim 2 be examined and discussed in a subsequent office action, or the rejection against claim 2 and the claims that depend therefrom be withdrawn.

Claim 3 should be allowable over and above the reasons set forth with regard to claim 2 since, again, the office action does not even identify a filter head and a separate filter head attachment, nor does the office action mention an annular seal between the bowl and anything identified as a filter head in the Mann reference. How can Applicants rebut something that is not even discussed in an office action? Applicants invite the Examiner to do the thorough review of the claim limitations, and examine the claim, and identify in the cited reference where Applicants' claimed features may be found, or withdraw their rejection.

With regard to claim 4, both the cited reference and the office action are silent as to Applicants' claimed feature. How could such a rejection be rebutted? It is flatly unfair to leave Applicants in the position of speculating as to where a claimed feature may be found in a cited reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding rejection against claim 4 and any claims that depend therefrom be withdrawn.

The office action is also silent as to Applicants' claimed hydrophobic coating on the metallic screen element, and required by claim 7. Therefore, Applicants respectfully invite the Examiner to identify where the claimed features may be found, or withdraw the rejection. Mann teaches a device that encourages capture of liquid droplets in a stream of gas, which would appear to require something different than a hydrophobic coating.

Claim 8 should be allowable over and above the reasons set forth with regard to its base claim since it specifically requires that the bowl be in sealing contact with the filter head, but the

office action does not even identify how this could be possible with the structure of Mann. Again, Applicants respectfully request that the features of Applicants' claimed invention be specifically identified in the cited reference, or the rejections should be withdrawn.

Applicants are utterly at a loss to figure out how the claimed plurality of engines of claim 9 can be read onto the airline vapor trap of Mann. But again, the office action is silent, and Applicants are left to speculate as to how an airline vapor trap can also be a plurality of engines. Therefore, Applicants again respectfully request that the claim be examined, and if there is a rejection to make, then Applicants claimed features should apparently be identified in the cited reference, or the rejection should be withdrawn.

Like claim 9, claims 10 and 11 were not even apparently examined, and therefore, Applicants have no utterance in the office action, and certainly there is none in the cited reference, that is capable of being rebutted. Therefore, Applicants again respectfully request that the claims be examined, and when this is done, it will become clear that Mann is incapable of anticipating the claimed subject matter of these claims, and it is only appropriate that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn.

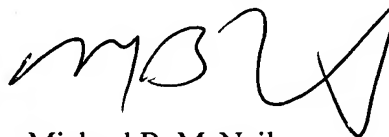
With regard to claim 12, the Mann reference is inherently incapable of satisfying the claimed steps. In the first instance, the Mann center support is not attached to anything. It is held in place by bolts 42. The claim does not require that the center support be moved out of contact with something identified as a filter head, it requires that the two things be detached from one another, which inherently means that they were once attached to one another. The same reasoning also covers the relationship between the center support and the bowl. Next, where can Applicants' claimed washing step be found in the Mann reference? Again, Applicants respectfully request that each and every feature of the claimed invention be identified or the rejections should be withdrawn.

Claim 13 should also be allowable over and above the reasons set forth with regard to claim 12 since the claimed steps are clearly not taught in the cited reference. There is also no inherent teaching in the cited reference that its "filter element" is ever even supposed to be cleaned. Instead, it is probably not even fair to characterize the Mann wire mesh as a filter; it is specifically taught as a means of coalescing oil and water vapor droplets, which is clearly an entirely different concept from trapping particulate matter in a fluid flowing through a filter as in Applicants' claimed invention.

Claim 14, like many of the other claims, was clearly not even examined as the cited reference to an airline vapor trap is clearly something other than a method of servicing a filtration portion of a fluid system for an engine. The cited reference is about coalescing oil and water vapor in compressed air in an airline application, whereas claim 14 is directed to a method of servicing a fluid system for an engine. The word "engine" does not even appear in either the office action or the cited reference, and therefore Applicants again are unfairly left to speculate as to how the cited reference could possibly anticipate Applicants' claimed subject matter. Again, Applicants respectfully request that the claim be examined and that the claimed features either be identified in the cited reference, or the rejection should be withdrawn.

This application is believed to be in condition for allowance of claims 1-14. However, if the Examiner believes that some additional clarification would put this application in even better condition for allowance, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney at (812) 333-5355 in order to hasten the prosecution this application.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MBM', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael B. McNeil
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